

**Minutes of 11th Meeting of Human Resources Committee
Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast
Monday 4 March 2019 – 10.30am**

Present: Paul Fitzpatrick (Chair), P O'Doherty (PO'D), G McAleer (GMcA), E McDowell (E.McD)

Apologies: Brian McGrath, Monica Culbert

In Attendance: Sam Gallaher (Chief Executive Officer), Majella Matthews (MM - Corporate Services)

Action

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

The CEO introduced MM and advised that he had invited her to attend in her capacity as having responsibility for HR matters as part of her role within Corporate Services.

2. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest.

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

3. Minutes of the 10th meeting of the HR Committee (HRC/19/Mins 10)

The Chair brought members through the minutes of its meeting held on the 20 November 2018 for accuracy and agreement

EMcD raised a query about item number 6 of the Minutes regarding staffing advised that the minute as recorded was incorrect. He stated that the Committee had agreed in principle to the proposed staffing structure subject to consultation with one member of staff and their union representative and undertaking a wider staff consultation process. The CEO assured members that the referred to member of staff was aware of what was proposed and had indicated no objection, however due process would be followed and preparatory work was ongoing with our HR provider. In addition a business case was being prepared as DE approval was also necessary.

The CEO reminded members that the aim was to recruit to certain current vacancies but that eventually all job descriptions would be subject to some realignment with the needs of the organisation. Job evaluation would be undertaken where changes are significant and that there would be full consultation with the staff and their NIPSA representatives.

EMcD asked if Council had been informed and if they had agreed to the proposed changes in staffing. The CEO confirmed that Council had received and discussed the same information presented to this Committee at its previous meeting. Council had agreed to the proposed changes and expected due process to be followed.

Action

EMcD reminded the Committee that the Council had only relatively recently been released from “special measures” because of a previous breakdown in staff relations. He also added that other members of Council had expressed their concerns about the need for a Communications/Marketing.

The CEO said that perhaps when people see a title like this they immediately think of “selling.” The important thing is the skillset that the organisation requires to move forward that is more than just communications. He advised that he has spoken to the Chair and Vice-Chair, Council itself and the F&GP Committee and there was broad agreement with what is being proposed. It was stressed again that what is proposed isn’t a radical shake up, is within current budget and of course will be subject to consultation and DE approval.

It was agreed the minute would be amended for agreement.

CEO

EMcD queried item number 11 of the Minutes relating to the agreement with NIPSA and asked for reminder of the position of the Agreement. The CEO stated that he had met with the NIPSA representative, staff nominations had come forward for consideration, an initial meeting with the SMT had been scheduled for 28th Jan but was cancelled as NIPSA rep had another engagement to attend. The meeting is being rescheduled.

The CEO temporarily moved from the review of the Minutes to give an update on developments in relation to an ongoing HR matter (**HR Update Report (HRC/19/11/01)**)

4. Matters Arising

The CEO advised that matters arising would be covered in the course of the meeting.

5. HR Update Report (HRC/19/11/01)

The CEO continued his update on outstanding HR issues and the actions being taken. He referred to the proposed staff restructure and advised that business cases had been submitted to the Department to extend the contracts of 4 temporary staff members for up to 9 months when he hoped that the staff restructure would be complete. In response to a query raised by EMcD, MM agreed to check and see after what period of time a temporary employee acquires contractual rights to a full time job.

MM

The CEO advised that SMT were considering the approach to staff appraisal with the aim of having appraisals complete by the end of June 19. PO'D stressed the importance of having the appropriate HR policies agreed and in place to support appraisal.

The CEO advised that a member of staff recently dismissed had lodged and Employment Tribunal claim against GTCNI and our solicitors have lodged our response.

6. Staff Absence Monitor (HRC/19/11/02)

The CEO presented the Sickness Absence Report to the Committee, advising that other than one member of staff there was no significant issues to report and underlying absence levels remain satisfactory.

7. Internal Audit Report – HR Policies (HRC/19/11/03)

MM advised that the Council’s HR policies hadn’t been subject to formal review since 2015. She advised that the Council’s HR support provider had been tasked with completing the review, rewriting, developing, consolidating and cross referencing the policies into a Staff Handbook that would be available electronically to all staff.

CEO/MM

This work has commenced with those policies that need development or significant amendment were being prioritised. Following due process the policies would be brought to HR Committee for approval. This is likely to spread over the coming meetings of the Committee.

MM

8. Business Planning

- 18/19 GTCNI Business Plan Q3 update (HRC/19/11/04)
- 19/20 Draft GTCNI Business Plan (HRC/19/11/05)

The CEO brought members through both papers and members noted the progress.

PF asked why the work stream on the Review of Qualifications has been delayed. The CEO responded that when he reviewed the status the 18/19 business plan upon taking up appointment, there appeared lack of clarity as to the rationale, scope and methodology associated with this work-stream, hence the decision to defer progress until these aspects were determined. Scoping work is in hand but essentially the purpose is to help Council determine what routes/qualifications into teaching it is prepared to recognise for registration into the profession in NI. This is important given changes that have taken place in other jurisdictions and that this subject hasn’t been reviewed for some time.

Members agreed that this work is at the heart of the Council’s remit, is politically sensitive and needs to be robust. PO’D stressed that there is a sequence to this work stream and expressed concern about affordability if it were to be scoped too wide.

Members went on to discuss the ongoing work on the leadership competences and the review of the existing competences.

PF said that there was a need to ensure that the competences are positively promoted and used constructively.

The CEO concluded that the Draft Business Plan for 2019-20 was aimed at taking the organisation forward in all areas of its responsibilities and addressing the recommendations from the DE reviews. It has been sent to DE for approval. It will however be subject to resourcing so at this stage is subject to change.

Action

9. Committee & Council Annual Evaluation (HRC/19/11/06)

Members undertook a reflective review of the operation of the Committee and Council over the past year. Members felt that the Committee had the requisite skills but noted attendance rates. No significant issues or concerns were raised. The CEO advised that he would provide feedback at the next Council meeting.

CEO

10. AOB

There was no other business to discuss.

11. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 29 May 2019

Signed..... Dated